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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DeKalb Interim CEO Revamps Ethics Rules *“Ethics Watchdog” post also created, will report to Ethics Board*

DECATUR – DeKalb Interim CEO Lee May, flanked by members of the DeKalb County Board of Ethics, signed an executive order which compiles and clarifies ethics rules for all employees of the Administration, as well as creating a new full time position that will report to the DeKalb County Board of Ethics.

The new position is a full time Chief Integrity Officer. “This will be our full time Ethics Watchdog, but he or she won’t report to me. He or she won’t report to the BOC. Our Ethics Watchdog will report directly to the Board of Ethics who are standing with me today,” said Interim CEO May.

The Chief Integrity Officer will be responsible for training all county employees, fielding tips about unethical behavior and monitoring an ethics hotline. The Chief Integrity Officer will have the unilateral power and responsibility to bring all ethics concerns directly to the attention to the Ethics Board, without having to wait for a citizen complaint.

“I firmly believe in due process, and allowing the issues that have already been brought to the table to run their legal course,” said Interim CEO May. “Having said that, it’s the improper and possibly illegal activity in DeKalb’s ranks that we don’t know about that keeps me awake at night.”

John Ernst, Chairman of the DeKalb Board of Ethics added, “It’s become quite clear that the time for talk is over and the time for action is now.... The bottom line is that it takes significant resources to hire investigators, gather the necessary information, get to the bottom of these complaints, take action, and potentially remove DeKalb County employees.”

Interim CEO May also activated a new ethics policy for all administration employees. The new policy compiles ethics guidelines found in the Organizational Act as it pertains to merit system employees, is now applicable to all employees under the supervision of the CEO.

Specific guidelines as it pertains to gifts, meals, travel, tickets and honoraria were updated as follows:

Gifts are only allowed up to \$40 per source. No source can give gifts totaling more than \$120 per year to any employee, except for awards or certificates, gifts from family members, gifts from other governments or gifts that are given to the county as a whole, not an individual.

(more)

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Meals can only be paid for only in connection with an official government purpose, otherwise the max is \$40 per source or per meal, with a maximum of \$120.

Travel expenses can only be claimed for an official government purpose.

Tickets to sporting or cultural events are not allowed unless there is an official government purpose.

Honoraria is not allowed, without exceptions.

An ethics website and hotline will be established and monitored regularly. The website is www.co.dekalb.ethicspoint.com The phone number will be 855-224-8216.

“By taking this bold step, CEO May makes DeKalb, by far, the shining example of what an ethics board should look like in the state of Georgia,” said William Perry, Executive Director of Common Cause Georgia.

“I am sick and tired of where we are and what we’ve become. What we have accomplished today is part of a holistic approach, and ultimately, a hard-line approach, to restore the public’s trust in DeKalb County government,” said Interim CEO May.



Interim CEO Lee May (center) announces new ethics rules for all employees that report to the administration, flanked by Ethics Board members Robert Blackman (left) and John Ernst (right)

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Interim CEO May and Ethics Board Chairman John Ernst answer questions regarding the new Chief Integrity Officer and other new positions for the Board of Ethics. In the background are Ethics Board members Robert Blackman and Clara DeLay



*William Perry, the Executive Director of Common Cause Georgia, fields questions from the media following the press conference
(more)*

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DeKalb County is Georgia's third largest county with more than 700,000 residents calling it home. Known for its business and education hub, growing international community and natural wonders, DeKalb County Government is administered by [Interim Chief Executive Officer Lee May](#) and legislative policy is set by a seven-member [Board of Commissioners](#).

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